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Is some tight conspiracy - some supersecret SMERSH-like cabal - knocking off our political leaders?

We can't know - and we don't. But were it the case, the first effort of the conspirators would be to hide all evidence pointing to them - even to their existence.

With the recent attempt on the life of Presidential aspirant George Corley Wallace, the old, haunting conspiracy question, inevitably comes up again. People want to know, but there really is no way to answer the question directly and responsibly.

If the question is "Can it be?" then the answer is "Yes".

Going back to what for today is a primitive time, my own World War II experience in the Office of Strategic Services - forerunner of the CIA - I do know that we were expert in such matters. Assassination techniques even then were refined to the point where we had secretly printed, limited edition texts on how to kill without getting caught, without leaving traces.

Simple and effective as were the assassination methods of 30 years ago, they are kidstuff compared to the real-life James Bondery of all modern intelligence services.

Do they kill?

Almost certainly without exception - all of them.

There is almost nothing all intelligence agencies do not do. CIA and military assassinations in Southeast Asia are no longer secret. The CIA's French counterpart, SDECE, long an international smuggler to finance itself, has been caught trafficking in heroin. With CIA active and tacit help, so have most Southeast Asian governments. Americans are their victims.

SDECE did contract to "wanted" Nazi war criminals its post-World War II assassinations.

And one of these Nazi war ciminals, General Reinhard Gehlen, wound up running a super-secret spy outfit in Germany for the CIA.

That intelligence agencies have the capability and the disposition to assassinate world leaders - how many times the CIA tried and failed to get Castro will never be known - does not mean that any one or any combination is decimating American leadership.

With what has been permitted to be known about the American assassinations, there can be no responsible answer to the question about a monster conspiracy. That all could have one common source seems doubtful.

However, with suppression the official policy, with evidence hidden, destroyed, manufactured and lied about, it is impossible to conclude that more than one has the same inspiration.

In all cases, evidence is and has been suppressed. In no single case has the government permitted the laboratory work on the bullets, for example, to be examined. I am at this very moment suing the Department of Justice for that evidence in the JFK assassination.

In the Martin Luther King assassination, I sued the Department of Justice for what it had actually confiscated, the only official copy of the evidence used to get James Earl Ray extradited from England. As Deputy Attorney General, Richard Kleindienst lied about this repeatedly and unabashedly. First, former Attorney General Mitchell, in promising to give me this evidence, certified that Kleindienst lied. More recently, with Kleindienst Acting Attorney General, his own lawyer told the U. S. Court of Appeals in Washington that Kleindienst had, indeed, lied.

With so long a history of official suppression and deception, the conspiracy question may never be laid to rest. In the cases of Lee Harvey Oswald and James Earl Ray, the evidence is overwhelming that neither fired a shot. There is no reasonable doubt that, in each of these assassinations, there was a conspiracy.

There is reason to believe that Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, convicted killer of Robert Kennedy, was not alone.

With Arthur Herman Bremer, caught in the act of pumping five shots at George Wallace, it is too soon to know. Early indications are that he alone fired shots. This is not the same as saying he was entirely alone in the project. Eight wounds are reported in four victims.

So, all that can be done responsibly is to examine the remarkable parallels in these assassination cases and that in which Jack Ruby killed Lee Harvey Oswald. Some parallels exist in all cases, others in some but not all. Their exceptionally great number in itself is enough to cause deep concern.

In all five cases, sexual inadequacy or aberration was alleged. In no case is it relevant if the accused is not guilty. It and related psychiatric problems attributed to all five men are relevant only if they figured in the crimes.

The FBI provoked the question with Bremer by an unprofessionalism unique in form but typical of all its assassination investigations, another characteristic all share.

Bremer's identification was immediately known to the police only. The FBI was there. It delayed searching his Milwaukee apartment until the curious had traipsed through it. Then the FBI left it unguarded. As a result, TV cameras, after focusing on the bullets the FBI, mysteriously, left lying around, showed scads of girlie pictures and pornography. A single woman only has been associated with Bremer. She is a 16-year-old girl who soon broke off with him. He wanted to take her

to porno films only.

Jack Ruby, whose killing of Oswald in every way except the number of shots is an exact duplication of the Wallace shooting, was a sexually far-out type.

Ruby walked directly up to his victim, with dozens of people, most of them police, surrounding his target, and shot him with a short-barreled pistol, exactly as Bremer did to Wallace. Ruby was wired both ways. He boasted of it. He disrobed in public and called for man or woman from his audience, saying it made no difference which.

Had it been relevant and necessary, the Dallas prosecution could have produced women from as far away as California who would have laid attempted rape to Ruby. He fondled the breasts of girls just entering puberty - in public. He even masturbated dogs.

Marina Oswald publicly taunted the father of her two girls about his unsatisfactory bedroom performance. If claims that Oswald was bi-sexual are as unsubstantial as they are irrelevant, they are numerous. The mysteriously dead David Ferrie, unquestionably homosexual, fled New Orleans as soon as Oswald was identified. Ferrie and Oswald had been in the same Civil Air Patrol cadet unit, Ferrie as instructor. Ferrie practiced fellatio with boys and delighted in masturbating them against his bedroom walls.

Whether or not Oswald was homosexual, I have heard men say they had sex relations with both him and Ruby and that Ruby and Oswald shared each other. One such man, Darryl "Dago" Garner, is now dead, officially of a heroin overdose. Garner was also accused of attempting to kill Warren Reynolds with a shot through the head. Reynolds is the only one at the scene of the killing of Dallas policemen J. D. Tippit who would not identify Oswald as the killer.

And Garmer's girl friend met her end in a Dallas jail.

James Earl Ray was said to have had no interest in women. This is as false as it is irrelevant. In his exploitation of the Ray case that was expected to yield a million dollars, William Bradford Huie managed to ruin the reputation of a woman who is but one of many who bedded with Ray.

Less attention was paid to Sirhan's sex life. From what is known he seems to have been ineffectual with women. Nothing indicates he is not a virgin.

There is no doubt that severe psychiatric problems controlled Sirhan, Ruby and Bremer. They and the two innocent accused came from broken or fatherless homes.

Ruby's mother was institutionalized for insanity. Her troubles included a "fishbone syndrome", the illusion that a bone was stuck in her throat.

Oswald's father died before he was born.

Ray's paranoid father abandoned his reportedly alcoholic mother.

Sirhan's father abandoned his wife and kids, leaving them without support.

And Bremer was hated by his own mother. Court records show she first refused to hold him when he was an infant and then slapped him for nothing, leading to this understatement from Judge John R. Kenney, "I can see this mother doesn't know anything about children."

Sylvia Bremer knew how to get babies. Her two oldest are bastards, by different fathers. The first of these, William, was delivered but three months after her marriage.

Marital squabbling was common in all five homes.

In a remarkable display of professional irresponsibility, a number of psychiatrists rushed into print with diagnoses of the Oswald

none examined. Professional journals actually printed this phoney science. The truth was carefully obscured by officials and distorted by the shrinks.

When he "defected" to the Soviet Union, something the Russians mistrusted, Oswald had a psychiatric evaluation. It showed him to be harmless. In the Marines, where he had been court-martialed twice, Oswald was not deemed in need of special psychiatric testing. His official psychiatric appraisal, as one would not gather from the Warren Report or the inspired, prejudicial publicity, is "no abnormalities noted in all categories". All records are consistent, with such designations as no "personality deviation or evidence of psychiatric abnormalities".

Ray asked for a psychiatric examination in prison. It disclosed no more than "anxiety". If he was not putting on, part of a jailhouse lawyer effort, the worst that can be said of Ray's mental state is that he shared a mild problem with 90 percent of all Americans. After allegations of psychiatric abnormalities, the psychiatrist who examined Ray disputed them.

With the three who did premeditatedly shoot, the record is different and consistent.

One of the big secrets of the Warren Report is that Ruby did premeditate his assassination of Oswald. That three who heard this from Ruby's roommate, George Senator, soon died mysteriously, also did not interest the Commission. Two were victims of apparent violence. Both were reporters.

One got it as he left his own bathroom in Dallas, in a manner still mysterious, seemingly from a karate chop. The other was shot dead in a Long Beach, California, police station. A series of contradictory and unsatisfactory official explanations were offered, raging

from the accidental dropping of a policeman's pistol, which magically discharged a bullet into the reporter's heart, to the accidental discharge of a bullet while two law-enforcers were playing quick-draw.

Before the Warren Report was issued and more than a half-year after he killed Oswald, Ruby did confess premeditation. The Commission did not report this. It too strongly suggests conspiracy.

The really striking parallels are between Sirhan and Bremer, both short men. Bremer deliberately copied Sirhan, beginning with stony silence on arrest. Bremer even refused to communicate with his family.

Initially, there was so strong a suggestion that at long last the lone, alienated assassin had finally emerged in response to official mythology, that each assassination is by a lone nut, that almost as soon as Bremer was identified, I asked friends closer to Milwaukee to try to check Bremer's reading matter for me, in his apartment and at the library.

(It is not well known, but there is probative evidence that more shots were fired than Sirhan's pistol held. Some evidence was officially destroyed. I have the receipt. And the bullet removed from Bobby Kennedy and traced to Sirhan's pistol by the District Attorney is not the one that killed Bobby.)

Bremer was stalking Wallace. The smile frozen on his face at rallies where he was photographed, including immediately before he shot, could not be ignored. Happiness in anticipation of murder is not common or normal.

Within 48 hours of the shooting, proof of the validity of my hunch was supplied when the FBI returned to the Maryland court the required list of what it seized under a warrant to search Bremer's car. It included Robert Kaiser's book, R.F.K. Must Die!, and one by an Arab lawyer treating Sirhan as a hero. Kaiser reproduces countless pages of Sirhan's "automatic writing" in which Sirhan repeated the phrase

used as Kaiser's title.

In notes left in his abandoned Milwaukee apartment, Bremer, consciously, copied the Sirhan notebooks, substituting Wallace's name for Bobby's.

Bremer's shooting of the Alabaman exactly duplicates the lying-in-wait ambush of the tiny Arab. It faithfully repeated Sirhan's timing, immediately after the victim's political speech at a political rally.

In the three cases where the shooter is identified beyond doubt, the same question lingers: Was he turned on by someone else? If this is the case, even if each is a lone shooter, there is a conspiracy, a sophisticated conspiracy.

The only exploration of this question to date was aborted by professional timidity. Psychiatrist Bernard L. Diamond took a few halting steps in this direction in his in-jail study of Sirhan. Sirhan is probably the world's easiest hypnotic subject. Diamond assumed Sirhan hypnotized himself.

It is a popular misconception that people cannot be hypnotized to do something wrong. The best but still little-known case is that of a criminal who hypnotized another to commit crimes for him in Copenhagen, Denmark. It became the subject of a novel, The Billiken Courier. It can be done and it has been.

Was it in these assassinations and this and other attempts?

Another of the extraordinary parallels in each of the five cases is official double-dealing and dishonesty in immediately identifying the accused as "red"-lining. Repeatedly, government leaked to a complacent and unquestioning press false claims that Oswald was a "red". Knowing better, the Commission hedged while still implying it.

However, Oswald's secret writings are strongly anti-Communist. If carefully underplayed in the Report, the Commission's own records

abound in his denunciations. He called the Russians "fat, stinking politicians". He denounced the U.S. Communist Party as "betrayers of the working class" and Moscow's dupe (his phrase, "valuable gold coin").

Knowingly falsely, Ruby was misidentified as a former young communist, a fiction that still recurs in extremist literature of the right. In actuality, Ruby was a dispenser of the literature of the fabulously rich and virulently anti-Communist H. L. Hunt.

When King was cut down, the immediate and inspired propaganda alleged a black-militant plot. Ray's first lawyer, Arthur Hanes, defender of the Ku Klux Klan, embroidered on this to espouse a mysterious Cuban connection, Castro-ite, of course. All the evidence is to the contrary.

Hanes found the FBI too "liberal". He quit it. He was also a contract employee of the CIA in anti-Castro activities. This is his own kind of political propaganda.

Hanes chose Renfro Hays as investigator in Memphis, a mentally-ill man whose selection filled responsible local lawyers with doubt. They would use Hays in only minor accident cases.

Hays expounded to me personally and at great length on his pet theory, that militant blacks who considered King and "Uncle Tom", were behind the caper.

This, too, found frequent repetition in the press.

(If any politics can be attributed to Ray, they are the opposite end of the spectrum and are those of his family, which is intimately connected with the so-called National States Rights Party, a minuscule racist fragment that finds the KKK too moderate.)

Extreme-right Cuban emigres immediately launched a fictitious claim to Sirhan's identification with left-wing causes. They did exactly the same thing with Oswald, wasting large sums and much precious

time for the FBI in its initial investigations of the JFK assassination. The same revenge-seekers, all right-wing extremists, were active in the Nixon-Agnew campaign. Leaders were rewarded with political plum. The one most active in this deception later becamse a Republican county chairman.

Their real links are to a commercializer of biblical tub-thumping, Billy James Hargis, and resigned General Edwin A. Walker, who had propagandized American troops under his command from the right extreme.

I have a dozen and a half once-secret but still-unprinted FBI investigative reports on these lings.

The Sirhan-red and Oswald-red propaganda is no more than that.

Even Bremer was a Wallace-ite. His car was a Rambler "Rebel". One of the few items taken by the FBI before it abandoned all the evidence in his apartment to curiosity-seekers (who, predictably and immediately, destroyed its evidentiary value) was a Confederate flag. Bremer was repeatedly seen overloaded with Wallace campaign literature. Lawrence Pierce, CBS News photographer, believed Bremer was a Wallace worker. Pierce was walking up to interview Bremer when he captured the shooting on his running film.

Bremer's car and apartment were adorned with Wallace stickers. The trash in his apartment held many Wallace campaign buttons.

Within five hours of his arrest, the Department of Justice announced Bremer's alleged left-wing connections, aired on NBC's interrupted Monday Night Movie. The Associated Press attributed this false report to "sources close to the investigation". When the Washington Post, which immediately assured its readers that all doubts were no more than rumors, pretended to seek the origin of this false report, it asked only the AP. Ap declined to identify its source.

The Post ignored NBC. But NBC aired this report, with full attribution, before it was on the AP wire. (I have checked this.)

One explanation is that AP will not admit cribbing from NBC News.

So, in every case, with the accused either non-Communist or anti-Communist, a red flag was immediately pinned on him.

Even family reactions are alike in instant conspiracy hints. Sirhan's family labeled him an Arab "patriot", aligning him with the anti-Israeli guerrillas (who subsequently hijacked three planes and demanded his freedom as their first condition for release of the passengers and planes). Ray's brothers said if he did it, he did it for money. Bremer's father's reaction is, "If he did it, he didn't do it on his own."

As short-barreled pistols were used by the three caught shooting, so two rifles not proven to have been used were blamed for the JFK and King assassinations. In both cases the FBI suppressed the evidence proving these rifles were not used.

I am suing for it in the JFK case and won a suit against the Department of Justice in the King case. That confiscated and then suppressed evidence, carefully withheld and grossly and deliberately misrepresented in the Memphis minitrial, actually says the FBI could not connect the rifle with the shooting.

This is identical with the misrepresented evidence in the Tippit killing. There the FBI could not connect the retrieved bullets with the pistol allegedly used to kill Tippit. The FBI could not even tie to that pistol by ballistics evidence 100 bullets it fired from that pistol.

So it is still another parallel, and more inspiration for lingering doubts, that in each and every case the FBI has suppressed non-secret lab reports that are required to be available under the law. (Section

five of the United States Code, chapter 552, the law under which I sued Suppression does not inspire confidence that the lab work proves the claims made for it.

(So persistently does the FBI do this that it would release only a meaningless and dubious paraphrase in its study of the evidence relating to the bomb used to kill two of his friends in a car in which Black Militant H. Rap Brown had been expected to be a passenger - two more assassinations.)

FBI unprofessionalism, in fact, is still another common denominator in all the assassinations. Those who know the FBI by its TV flackery and inspired deification of J. Edgar Hoover would not recognize it or him from their work in the assassinations.

In the Tippit killing, FBI failures are so obvious even known witnesses were avoided. By coincidence, these/witnesses avoided said what the FBI did not want said.

Identically the same thing is true in the Memphis investigation of the King killing. Those who were at the scene and disputed the official story also were avoided. Known and completely exculpatory evidence was carefully withheld from the rubber-stamp jury in the substitute for a trial.

(Ray has never been tried. He has spent two futile years in an effort to obtain a public trial. Official resistance to a public trial is because there is no case at all against Ray.)

In the Sirhan case, violation of established police procedures are not limited to the destruction of evidence and failure to trace the fatal shot beyond reasonable doubt. It includes such obvious omissions as failing to search and fingerprint the car, the key to which was in Sirhan's pocket.

An independent expert criminalist, William W. Harper, swore that the recovered bullets account for all the weight fired from the Sirhan pistol without counting the weight of a bullet still lodged in the ceiling of the Ambassador Hotel kitchen. Harper's evidence is under oath. If it is false, he could be subjected to prosecution. He has not been.

With Oswald, the fakery, destruction and manufacture of ballistics evidence alone is too extensive to itemize here. The simplest formulation paralleling the other cases is that the FBI never tested the allegedly recovered bullet and fragments for human residues. They are virtually indestructible. So, no bullet was ever tied to both a victim's body and the weapon allegedly used.

This cannot be because the FBI does not know the FBI business or the rules and requirements of evidence.

But the real pinnacle of professional unprofessionalism, still not completely exposed, is in the Bremer case.

As in all cases, the FBI immediately strong-armed its way in. Bremer's is the only case in which it could assert legal right to do so. Unless, as fraudulently it did with Ray, it charged conspiracy. The other crimes were all outside federal jurisdiction.

"Strong-armed" is not a mere figure of speech. A local prosecutor told two friends of mine that he was, literally, roughed up by Bureau agents, immediately after the crime.

Prince George's County, Maryland, where this and the crime took place, soon enough had sweet revenge.

Bremer's crimes under Maryland law are numerous. As in the other cases, the federal government took charge immediately. There was total silence from partisans of what they call the rights of the states. Merely carrying that pistol into Maryland was a crime. It was Bremer's

first shooting-connected crime.

An earlier arrest on a similar carrying-a-concealed-weapon charge should have galvanized all police agencies, local and federal. Bremer was picked up in Milwaukee on October 18, 1971. Oddly, that charge was then reduced to "disorderly conduct", a misdemeanor only.

After Bremer started stalking Wallace, he was again the object of official attention, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. There, on the previous Saturday, he began sitting in his car in a private parking lot near where Wallace was to speak - 11 hours early. Businessman Bob Ganser, after watching Bremer sitting in his stake-out for six hours, called the police.

They questioned Bremer and bought his far-out explanation, that he wanted to be on time! They also seem to have taken never-used still and motion pictures of him. Then they let him go.

Earlier, Bremer checked into New York's swank Waldorf Astoria Hotel, on April 7 and 8. Wallace was at that hotel at the same time. Hubert Humphrey had a reservation but did not use it. And Edmund Muskie was in the same area at the same time.

One lone, unassisted man knowing all these things in advance, even the hotels in which reservations were made? Hard to believe!

At two of Wallace's appearances near my home, first in Hagerstown, Maryland, 25 miles away, next about four miles away, in the Frederick Armory, there was violence and public disturbance. These created the ideal situation for an assassination attempt.

But our local, country-boy police, city and State reinforced, knowing and practicing their business, prevented it. They formed a human police barricade around Wallace, solid and three-to-four officers deep, and eliminated the possibility.

The shooting was an hour's drive from my home.

Aside from a permanent, tinder-box situation surrounding the controversial Wallace, in itself enough to demand the greatest alertness by his permanent Alabama trooper and Secret Service bodyguards, this violence right before his Wheaton and Laurel, Maryland, appearances should have red-flagged them.

If not earlier, then beginning at Kalamazoo at the very latest, Bremer should have been the object of intensive official-protector interest. Had the most perfunctory and obvious police work been done, his pistol would have been found. Had he been traced through normal police channels - if more than being armed and lying in wait were required - another red-flash warning. In Milwaukee alone there are recorded his C.C.W. charge and his January 13 purchase of the pistol he used..

There also it would have been learned that a minister who interviewed Bremer in 1971 said that he "appears to bottle up anger but will sometime let it go - I assess him as bordering on paranoia."

(Parallels again. Particularly to the exact words of the Sirhan defense. It described Sirhan as in "a state of gathering paranoidal rage" when he shot Bobby. And both families described both shooters as "nice kids"!)

But reporters were more alert. Like CBS's Pierce, they spotted grin-frozen Bremer when trained police professionals failed to.

More parallels? Sure. The FBI never told the Dallas police or the Secret Service of Oswald's presense or history of alleged defection.

And almost no Dallas cop did not know Ruby, his history of violence and his habitual pistol-totin'. Yet they saw him repeatedly where he had no business being, inside the building in which Oswald was confined, within feet of him on several occasions, and said nothing.

If these professional gaffes are hard to accept, they are nothing

compared to grosser FBI failures, more than not taking everything in Bremer's Milwaukee apartment and not mounting careful guard over it.

Yet even this is an incredible departure from its record in previous assassinations, where the FBI seized everything, even when it had no legal right to do so.

When the Dallas police kept a single empty cartridge case for its own study, the FBI demanded and got it - at 2 a.m. In Dallas it even traced Oswald's hairs, taking some from his genitals. Thus it established that his pubic hairs were on a blanket known to be his, establishing nothing. And who but the wife should be concerned about whose pubic hairs were on her husband's blanket?

With Ray, where the official copies of the evidence used to get him extradited - and the extradition was illegal - were confiscated, they also traced hairs and fibres. Here also the search was irrelevant without tying Ray to the shooting, which was never done.

The room he rented in the Memphis flophouse was fingerprinted. The bathroom from which it is said the shot was fired was fingerprinted, too. So was his car. There was a palmprint in the bathroom, not Ray's. There were fingerprints in the car, again not Ray's. None were found in the bedroom.

If the FBI is keeping secret who besides the accused was identified by fingerprints, it at least did do the obvious police work in the Memphis case.

With Bremer, the FBI did not. It even flubbed the search of his car, which it preempted from the local police.

Once again, those who, like my own small-town police, are hicks to the over-advertised and self-advertising FBI, did what the big shots didn't do.

The FBI had the car at a public garage until 4 p.m. the day after

the crime. Then, armed with their own search warrant, the local police towed it to their own training academy.

"We're going a little bit deeper," Assistant Chief John W. Rhoads said. "They're looking in all the hiding places," he added as the four rubber-gloved detectives took the "Rebel" Rambler apart, piece by careful piece. At each step pictures were taken. Small parts were placed in individual plastic bags.

The result of this orthodox police work not done by the FBI was that sweet revenge. It turned up a much better but larger military-type, rifle-like and more accurate, faster-shooting pistol, better suited for killing from a distance. The 14-shot, Browning semi-automatic, 9mm. weapon is of infinitely better quality. It is an expensive piece.

It was shipped October 13, 1971, from the Morgan, Utah, plant in which it was manufactured, consigned to the Flintrop Arms Co., 4034 W. National Avenue, Milwaukee. The most perfunctory police work when Bremer first attractdd attention to himself in his six-week stalking of Wallace should have disclosed this purchase, too.

And Wallace would not have been shot.

All this money Bremer spent had to come from someplace. This is reminiscent of the unemployed Sirhan, whose pockets held $100 bills; of Oswald, who spent more than could ever be officially accounted for; of Ray, whose year-long international travels cost much more than can be attributed to his robberies. Even Ruby's pockets and car-trunk were loaded with cash while he owed the federal government a five-figure tax bill.

In the previous year, Bremer's total income was but $1,600. He worked for a couple of months in earlier 1972, as a busboy and janitor, not high-paying jobs.

Yet he stalked his prey for six weeks, staying at such plush hostelries as the Waldorf-Astoria; had two costly pistols; seemingly expensive clothing (three suitcases are listed in the return on the search warrant); had relatively costly personal items, like cameras, tape recorder and what could have been intended for use in plotting the assassination, binoculars.

If the extent of Bremer's traveling, whether or not he was alone and unassisted, is not known, there is indication in the finding of 13 road maps plus a Rand-McNally Atlas in his car.

Six weeks of keeping a car on the road, exclusive of the cost of food and such hostelries as the Waldorf-Astoria, would seem to exceed the resources of a part-time janitor/busboy.

Again, the inevitable question of conspiracy.
Where did all that money come from?

Not, surely, from cleaning tables and sweeping floors.

With the world full of intelligence agencies having departments of dirty tricks that in turn plan, commit and subcontract assassinations, can any one of them be ruled out in any one or combinations of these crimes? (The spooks, by the way, like paranoids because they are more security-conscious and those with a tendency toward self-destruction, ~~who~~ because they are more daring.)

Can we be sure that some new, supersecret, supercompetent combine has not decided to eliminate our national leading political figures, each one of whom was picked off at a crucial turning-point in his career?

Must we not wonder: And ask? And expect more of the national police than botched "investigations" and deceptive, political announcements

Until we know the answers, will any leader, any candidate, ever be safe?

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Despite what the major media say, George Wallace was shot not at the pinnacle of political succes but when he had sustained a major set-back in Maryland. This truth has been lost in the emotional reaction to the attempt to kill him.

With general agreement that the attempted assassination the day before the primary would increase his vote, his percentage of the total vote was less than he got in 1964. Then he garnered 43%, this year only 40%.

That difference in itself is not significant. What is material is the large Goldwater vote in 1964 and Wallace's ballot spot not as a major-party Democrat but as a new third-party.

Yet with Goldwater cutting into his vote in 1964 and the advantage of running as a Democrat this year, he didn't do nearly as well.

When the enormous added attention he has gotten in the intervening eight years is considered, with the fact that the Democrats are the majority party in Maryland, George Wallace slipped badly here.

His voters did turn out. In each election district, the larger the percentage of registered voters who went to the polls, the larger the percentage of the Wallace vote. This means that if the McGovern and Humphrey supporters stayed away from the polls, Wallace's didn't.

Further diminishing his political luster in a State where he has been popular is his non-populist reception in the urban areas, where most blue-collar workers live. There his percentages were smaller than in the rural areas, some of which he swept pretty clean.

In turn, this provokes wonder about the significance of bussing as a reason for major support of Wallace. Rural Maryland's children have been bussed long distances since the advent of the bus. Without bussing, country kids would have their high-school education limited in many cases to what can be provided in the disappeared one-room schools. Nobody wants this limitation on education.

My wife was bussed 40 miles daily when she entered high school. And she and were pretty happy about it.

While Wallace got only two-fifths of the Democratic vote, the Associated Press trumpeted his " 2 to 1 Victory", misleadingly because his vote was twice that of the closest rival. Forty percent is not a 2-1 lead.

Nixon Republicants went big for Wallace. All three leading Democrats outpulled the incumbent President.

If much of his strength in the Democratic primary came from cross-overs, a Washington Post poll indicates that four out of five Wallace supporters will vote for Nixon if Wallace is not the candidate.

Especially with Wallace crippled, probably permanently, this might well lead to an second-place alliance with Humphrey, a prospect before the attempted assassination.

What a switch that would be for both men, the first overtly now covertly racist Wallace running number two to the Humphrey who, in 1948, took the lead in ending inner-party discrimination against blacks!

But if Maryland is a fair sample, the shrewd Wallace knows he has slip ed badly. That and his paralysis should make any Number Two spot more attractive to him.